

the city we love to love

Ah, to meet
in Paris—
where food
is finer, the
flowers brighter,
and strolling
is the preferred
method of
transportation.
by Christopher Pitts





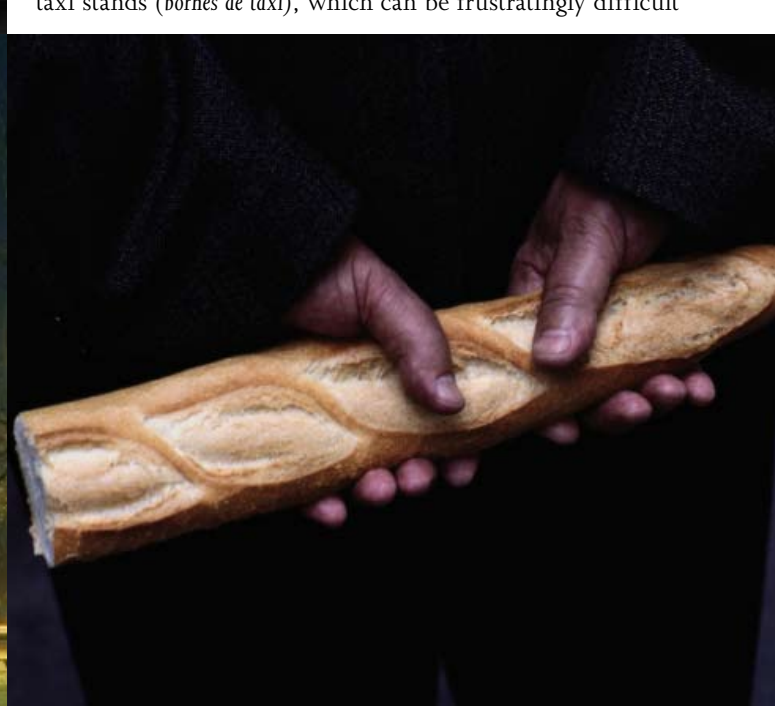
A FIRST TRIP TO PARIS IS FILLED WITH MOMENTS OF magic and unfettered joy: the tantalizing aroma of fresh croissants wafting out of a corner bakery, the breathtaking views from atop the Eiffel Tower, the pastel colors of a Monet canvas or the sunset over the Seine, the strains of accordion music echoing through a Métro tunnel at midnight...everyone has their own private romance with this city. Each time you return, you'll find that inimitable thrill of first love comes back with you.

Paris is like no other city because the Parisians are like no other people. Their delight in sensory pleasure, taste for sophistication and love of artistry are what give the French capital its particular allure. And Paris rarely disappoints—it seems like the city has been the world's number one tourist destination since time immemorial. But there's much more to Paris than great monuments and infinite museums: It is also the political and economic heart of France.

One of the most important financial and corporate headquarters in continental Europe, Paris is also home to Euronext, Europe's largest stock market after London's. For a country that's smaller than Texas, France generated an impressive GDP of US\$1.7 trillion in 2005—the sixth largest in the world and third largest in the European Union. On the flip side, however, growth has slowed considerably in recent years, and unemployment remains high (above 8.5 percent), leaving France with an uncertain and much contested future when sized up against the globe's emerging giants.

Getting Around

The Paris Métro is fast, extensive and hands-down the best way to get around the city. Tickets are cheap (€1.40), and the network is easy to navigate. You can pick up a pocket-sized map at the airport or at the ticket booth in stations. Ask about day passes (*Paris Visite*) when sightseeing. Taxis—generally very comfortable and reasonably inexpensive (from €0.77 to €1.31 per km)—are also a good option. Remember, however, that you can't flag them down on the street. Taxis only stop at taxi stands (*bornes de taxi*), which can be frustratingly difficult



paris

If you
have:

a free hour

Take a stroll past the Marais' 17th-century aristocratic townhouses, stop for a quick espresso at a café in **Place des Vosges** (some say it's Paris' most beautiful square) and continue on to the city's revolutionary heart at **Place de la Bastille**.

Place des Vosges



Ile St. Louis from the Seine

If you
have:

a free day

Start your morning with a boat cruise (bateaux-mouches) down the Seine. Disembark at **Ile de la Cité** or **Ile St-Louis** (the central islands) to visit the city's spiritual heart, the Gothic cathedral of **Notre-Dame**. From here, take your pick of three of the world's best museums: **the Louvre**, **the Musée d'Orsay** (Impressionist art) and the **Centre Pompidou** (modern art). Afterward, backtrack to Left Bank boutiques for high-end shopping, cobbled-street-wandering or more church visits at **St-Germain-des-Prés** and **St-Sulpice**. Wind down the day with an evening ascent of the illuminated **Eiffel Tower** or a stroll down the elegant **Champs-Élysées**.

If you
have:

a free weekend

Another day gives you time to explore hillside **Montmartre** in the morning and climb the endless steps to the **Sacré Coeur** basilica for more inspiring views. In the afternoon, you'll have time for another museum, or you could drop in on the Phantom at the **Opéra Garnier** before popping over to nearby **Galleries Lafayette** for gifts. Finish up your weekend with some memorable entertainment: From classical music to cabaret to nighttime rollerblading, the City of Light is bound to have exactly what you're looking for.



Montmartre

to locate. Make sure to order a taxi well in advance if you aren't at your hotel. Try Taxis G7 (01 47 27 66 99) or Taxis Bleus (08 91 70 10 10).

Hotels

The majority of businesses are located in western Paris or further out in La Défense, Europe's largest concentration of office space. Consequently, it's best to narrow down the city's bewildering choice of accommodations—Paris boasts nearly 1,500 hotels—by restricting yourself to the 1st, 2nd or 8th *arrondissements* (districts), which will keep your morning commute to a minimum. Old-World opulence is the draw of the palatial Ritz (€680 and up), quite possibly Paris's most famous hotel. Join Hemingway's ghost at the bar for a martini. At the other end of the design spectrum is the stylishly contemporary Hôtel Arc de Triomphe (€600 and up). The business amenities, friendly service and spacious Art Deco rooms garner rave reviews from many executives. If you're looking for a more intimate stay, the delightful Hôtel d'Orsay (suites €320 and up) has all the wooden-rafter appeal of old Paris, but without skimping on modern luxuries.

Restaurants

From three-star dining experiences to local wine bars and decadent pastry shops, there's no debating the fact that the French know how to stimulate the palate, and Paris is the apex of fine dining à la française. In the mood to be dazzled? Treat yourself to teasers of taste (hot pepper and lemongrass sorbet) and other haute cuisine creations (grilled lamb in citrus juice) at the sublime Astrance. Or sample shrimp in caviar sauce, blue lobster with spaghetti carbonara, and black truffle butter on toast in the extravagant marble dining room of Les Ambassadeurs, overlooking Place de la Concorde. For heartier French fare, step into Alain Ducasse's belle époque brasserie, Aux Lyonnais, which specializes in the timeless classics: coq au vin, sausages and—for the daring—frog's legs. ➔



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Taking on the French

by Dean Foster

PEOPLE DO BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY IN DIFFERENT CULTURES—SO WHAT seals the deal in Paris, Illinois, can be a non-starter in Paris, France. Having a basic understanding of French culture is essential to successful business in the City of Light. Here are some fundamentals to get you started:

- 1. Get your story straight** Method may be just as important as the final outcome. With a culture still attuned to the tenets of the Enlightenment, the French place a high value on a proper conceptual approach, rationale and the logic that grounds any plan, presentation or decision. You will need to outline all the details from A to Z—big and small—that substantiate your proposal.
- 2. Embrace criticism** Be prepared, therefore, for meeting interruptions where your Parisian contact questions your facts and demands details that you may have chosen to omit. Critical, careful analysis based on a healthy dose of French skepticism is valued far more than optimistic American decisiveness.
- 3. Bureaucracy lives** Hierarchy and rigid organizational structure are still very much alive and well in France. Do your homework ahead of time, and make sure you are speaking with the correct individual in the organization to make the decision. If not, your contact will need to solicit others in the hierarchy before making a commitment.
- 4. Parlez-vous français?** Learn some French and use it—but prepare to be corrected, then spoken to in English. The French are very proud of their language as a symbol of their cultural achievements, and they admire when others use it...correctly.
- 5. The mingling strategy** Take some time to socialize with your French contact, typically over a meal. Resist the urge to talk business (unless they bring it up first). Rather, reveal your personal side, background, thoughts and ideas. This will help insure their receptivity to your business proposal.
- 6. Here's to you** When the deal is finally signed, schedule a celebratory French dinner (hors d'oeuvres, appetizer, a main course, cheese, dessert and coffee—after, never with, dessert) in a fine restaurant, and toast (“À votre santé!”) with the best French wine you can afford.

DEAN FOSTER is principal of Dean Foster Associates (learnaboutcultures.com) and an expert in intercultural management for global business.



Hôtel d'Orsay



Charles de Gaulle

Getting there

Paris has two airports (aeroportsdeparis.fr): the larger Charles de Gaulle (CDG), where most travelers will arrive, and smaller Orly. CDG has three terminals, Orly has two; one of your first stops should be the closest information desk, where you can pick up city and Métro maps, as well as other helpful materials. Wi-Fi hotspots and work zones are available in both airports.

Taxis into town take 30 to 45 minutes in light traffic and are reasonably priced (around €45 from CDG and €35 from Orly). Other options include the RER-B train line, which runs from CDG to central Paris in 30 minutes (€8.10); and the RER-C train line, which runs from Orly to central Paris in 35 minutes (€5.75).



Restaurants

Astrance

4, rue Beethoven
16th arrondissement
Tel: 01 40 50 84 40

Aux Lyonnais

32, rue St-Marc
2nd arrondissement
Tel: 01 42 96 65 04

Les Ambassadeurs

10, Place de la Concorde
8th arrondissement
Tel: 01 44 71 16 16

Hotels

Hôtel Arc de Triomphe

51-57, rue de Courcelles
8th arrondissement
Tel: 01 58 36 67 00
hilton-paris.com/arcdetriomphe

Hôtel d'Orsay

93, rue de Lille
7th arrondissement
Tel: 01 47 05 85 54
paris-hotel-orsay.com

Hôtel Ritz

15, place Vendôme
1st arrondissement
Tel: 01 43 16 30 30
ritzparis.com



Deluxe Suite at the Ritz

